

## Parents & 'Education.'

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It is curious to consider the attitude taken up by parents in general on the subject of education. In the last quarter of a century or more, 'Education' has, in one form or other, been pretty constantly & fully prominently before us. The air has been full of compressed noise of many words, but the dir. has been, for the most part, in the several camps of the Schoolmasters & their allies, the parents standing round to see fair play. Now, when the conflict of opinion issues in something definite, the 'Modern Side', the High School for Girls, the Knickerbocker, the Universities' Local Examinations, parents come in to give the new thing ~~their~~ very hearty & unfeigned support, provided that it commend itself to their common sense. But they don't make the first move. They have a right to expect that fitting education shall, somehow, be provided for their children, & they are willing to pay for it. For this way of looking at the matter implies two ~~dispositions~~ notions; first, that 'Education' belongs to the School, is to the professional teachers, & has little to do with the bringing up children yet at home; next, that, while it may be necessary to study the laws of mind & of body to get at right principles of education for the School, home bringing up is another matter, & wants no more than the light of nature & common sense, & is successful according as parents have more or less of the latter quality. A great deal is being said just now about technical education. The reform demanded is, that the children in elementary schools should

222mc33

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A real deal - being said just now about technical education. Shall or shall not the children in elementary schools get such training of <sup>their</sup> hands as shall put them <sup>in the immediate</sup> facility in learning a handicraft - <sup>is the immediate</sup> question before the country. <sup>thoughtful parents</sup> <sup>that the child should be brought to do a little work</sup> <sup>as to the answer, in this movement - in favor of</sup> <sup>compulsory education, both mental work, but that this murder</sup> <sup>of electrical education is an expression of</sup> <sup>that he learned to use the tools.</sup> a strong sentiment which is bringing about a revolution in the thinking world. Now this question, so understood, marks a certain educational advance; the recognition of principle which underlies the possibility of education - that the human frame, brain as well as muscles - grows to the use it - is earliest - put to. Mrs. Meredith: Here is a hint for thinking people. The industry of the pick is hardly to be fostered, but what if the tool, of the tools could be put so well that the fingers shape themselves unobtrusively to the work. You see it in the fingers of practiced pianist - caressing over imaginary keys. Now is it a case of yourself versus mind. Delightful possibilities open of wage earning work done by the older boys & girls, who under such changed conditions are allowed to stay at school until their ~~thirteenth~~ <sup>as 14 or 15</sup> instead of being removed at - <sup>Reis 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> years.</sup> for 3 or 4 additional years schooling at an age when can appreciate it. It should be of most use to them.



28p30me33

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tools - not that they should be turned out complete  
as a finer handicraft. Now this demand, as  
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recognition of the principle which underlies  
the possibility of all education - that the human  
frame - brain as well as muscles - grows to  
the uses it - is earliest put to. It is hardly  
possible to get beyond the ground covered by this  
simple sounding axiom; in other words,  
it is hardly possible to overstate the possibilities  
of education. Anything may be made of a child  
by those who first get him into their hands. The  
fond natured parent does not hold his news with  
unmixed joy. The responsibility of parents to which  
human nature is averse is being shifted from  
the shoulders of the schoolmaster to his own. He  
is inclined to take an optimistic view of things.  
'I don't see,' he says, 'but that - you leave out  
the criminal classes & that sort of thing, the  
world goes on very well. Our children are  
good & pleasant; our friends are good & pleasant;  
there are infinitely many good & pleasant &  
able people in the world; what more would you  
have?' And you think of the pleasant people  
you know, & answer, 'What more indeed!' Perhaps  
it is an impertinence to think of mending  
a system which has produced so much that  
is good. But then you look at home -  
to find yourself compassed about with infirmities;  
you look abroad, in almost every family there  
is a spoilt life, & you hardly know a person  
without

21p 40mc 33

some defect of heart or intellect or temper which  
makes him a little burdensome to himself &  
a little trying to his friends. It is because of  
the infirmities & not the sins gotten that it is  
difficult to live at peace; & it is, commonly, our  
own infirmities, & not our sins, that are <sup>our</sup> stumbling  
blocks ~~in our paths~~. Now, in the light of anatomy  
second, it is not too much to say that every infirmity  
of the flesh & spirit is, more or less, the result  
of defective education. Is a man sullen,  
of defective education. Is a man sullen,  
<sup>in his</sup> ~~in his~~ indolent, like his father or mother  
before him? That is the fault of his education:  
she was born with a tendency to sullenness, <sup>but</sup>  
but a tendency only becomes a temper as the  
result of an indulged habit. That such a habit  
should have been allowed to grow on the child is  
an instance of defective education. Has a  
man a large brain & a narrow chest? We  
have recently been told on good authority that the  
width of the chest of the new-born infant varies  
only with the size of the child; in other words, that is,  
children are not  
~~an infant~~ <sup>are not</sup> born with a narrow chest. Therefore,  
the narrow chest, with attendant low vitality, is  
a consequence of defective education. It is  
needless to go on setting aside cases of congenital  
disease - even here education may do in-  
finitely much - it rests with parents in free means  
to work out the salvation of their children, though  
with great abating, for there are mysteries of  
sin & temptation beyond the scope of education.  
There is no room to doubt that his education, such as  
it was, has been the making of every man, such  
as he is; that, not so much his school education  
as the bringing-up he got at home. And it is <sup>not</sup>



1895 June 33

Sense, & that peculiar natural aptitude bestowed by the Creator which few will venture to deny to the parent. Did this divine calling, that of the parent requires the preparation of careful study: the problem of education is not to be solved by rule of thumb. To quote Dr. Spencer again, "Some acquaintance with the principles of physiology & elementary truths of psychology is indispensable for the right bringing-up of children." "Indispensable" - yes, the parent who has not laid himself out - diligently to gain some acquaintance with the principles of these two sciences cannot - conceivably turn out his children at their very best: at the most, he can but guide himself by hearsay & follow a course because ~~conveniently~~ <sup>advised</sup> that his treatment of his children is empirical uncertainty: but let parents get an insight into the principles of education as based upon natural laws, & they go to work with the courage, confidence & consistency which <sup>carry success</sup> ~~are more than half the battle~~. What is more, "As labour we delight in physics pain"; we delight in doing what we know how to do: and the ~~labours~~ <sup>task</sup> of education, ~~another~~ of being a burden & a puzzle, becomes the ennobling & delightful occupation of the parent's life.

But what, practically, is education, & on what conditions does educability depend? These questions are important, as, in the first place, shaping the aims of the rational parent, & in the next, as determining whether parents themselves are open to education - that is, whether it is ~~forbidden~~ <sup>forbidden</sup> to bring before the average parent the principles ~~of education~~ on which he is morally bound to bring up his child.

We are all agreed that education, even intellectual education, means something more than the acquisition of knowledge; we know, too, that there is an education of the feelings, of the will, of the <sup>phys</sup>

physical powers - in fact, the idea of education spreads about us & about us, vast & nebulous, hardly to be taken in by the mind, much less to be expressed in a sentence or two. The notion is too big for us: it is impracticable; come just let it go, & fall back on the old idea that education is synonymous with 'schooling'.

The aim of education is easier to define: it is the turning out of a human being at his absolute best, turning out of a human being at his absolute best, every tendency to evil repressed, every capacity for good that is in him developed into a power. <sup>After learning</sup>

whatever goes under the name of 'schooling' will not carry us far here. <sup>words working out this idea</sup> But more than one educational reformer has come forward with a beautifully produced method of education providing for the orderly & progressive development of the child's faculties; & that, always following the lead of Nature & reverently observing her laws. But I must not say a word here of the principles of Froebel, of the practical we owe him for originating, or rather, for labouring to perfect, a true conception of education.

But Education is Chameleon-like, & many descriptions are true of it. Let me offer a definition which is very far from being exhaustive, ~~and~~ <sup>but yet</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~deserves to be called~~ <sup>practical working</sup>. ~~A definition because~~ <sup>it will be</sup> found to cover the whole ground. It is an aspect of the subject which seems to me important, both because it shows how indispensable to the parent is some scientific knowledge, & also because it opens up a field of definite, practical work, with assured results. & there is just as to be like the return of a pound for the outlay of a penny.

Education



Pending the development of the will, which arrives at maturity, if ever, only with the maturity of the man, it ~~appears to me that~~ habit is the instrument - put into the hands of the educator therewith to supplement the weak will of the child, & to enable him to make with less of pleasure than good & necessary efforts to which human nature is averse. Do a thing a hundred times in succession, without lapses, it becomes as easy to do it as not; do it a thousand, or so, times, & it becomes your nature, a habit which you must do violence to yourself to break through. Were it not that life is made easy to all of us by persistent habits, the labor of decision on all trifling matters of daily living - of the bath, the toilet, the table, the common avocations - would wear us out.

Now this enormous force of habit appears to me to bridge over the otherwise impassable gulf between the spontaneous development of human nature & the ordered action of the self-disciplined human being. It is possible to form in the child the habit of doing or saying, even of thinking & feeling, that which he should do or say. Think or feel. It is possible (with certain sed limitations) to form in him the habits of vigorous health, of a good life, of alert intelligence, & thereby, to ease his way, spare him much of struggle & disappointment, of the childish despair & self-disgust which causes many a child to give up early the effort to direct life, to 'be good' as a thing beyond his power. If this be so, you will be willing to go far in ~~in assenting to the formation of~~ habits - a first place in education, ~~consequently, that~~ let's care for child's habits, & the rest will take care of itself; & in this light, it is hardly too much to say, that

Ed.